

carrier on the east coast of the United States, and all of them are home-ported in one place. That is not the defense posture the United States should be in.

It is another thing to talk about the parochial interests, which I represent, of Jacksonville and Florida. That is certainly an economic hit because Jacksonville, even if they get a nuclear carrier—and by the way, 5 to 7 years down the road it is another administration and another Congress to make those decisions—but in the meantime, Jacksonville doesn't have a carrier for 5 to 7 years, with the economic hit that takes place and the Nation doesn't have its carrier assets spread on the Atlantic coast of this country. That is not a position we should have.

I am going to offer a compromise, since it seems that the Pentagon is absolutely intent on scrapping—they call it mothballing—this carrier. The compromise I am suggesting, and I talked to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs just moments ago, is since the Navy and the Pentagon have decided they are not going to rehab the *John F. Kennedy* in a dry dock and save that expense, but the *Kennedy* can remain operational for the next 3 to 4 to 5 years without being rehabbed in dry dock, let us keep our assets dispersed on the east coast until these decisions are made and the facilities are changed so we can spread our nuclear carrier assets.

That does another thing for the defense policy of this country. There is a question coming up in 2008, when the conventionally powered aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* is scheduled to be decommissioned. She is now home-ported in Japan because Japan, the Japanese Government, has had a policy of not accepting a nuclear carrier. What happens if by 2008 the Japanese Government does not change the policy and will not receive a nuclear carrier? Then we ought to have the *John F. Kennedy* kept alive in an operational status where it can fill that role and, over the course of the next 3 years coming up to 2008—and we are in 2005 right now—we will know the status.

From the standpoint of defense policy, No. 1, of spreading our carrier assets, the compromise I am offering makes sense. No. 2, from the standpoint of being able to respond quickly if we needed another conventionally powered carrier in Japan, we would have a backup conventional carrier in 2008 if the Japanese Government would not receive a nuclear carrier. And, No. 3, it would not disrupt the lives of all those Jacksonville families by suddenly abolishing one of our carriers and all of the 5,000 sailors and their families and perhaps other ships in the carrier battle group that would go away. It seems to me it is the prudent defense policy thing to do.

I know if I offer this, if it is not being considered in the Pentagon, that I am swimming upstream. But I think it is worth the fight, not only as a Senator

representing Florida but as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee; it is a matter of protection, of the defense interests of this country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes, but then following my remarks that the Senator from Tennessee be recognized for any remarks he might have, and following the conclusion of his remarks that I might then be recognized at that time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today we mourn the passing of a great man. In the long history of Roman Catholic Popes, John Paul II is among the greatest in championing human dignity. He also was a champion for the sanctity of human life and for the family and for working for the good of his Church. He is the kind of leader who only comes along once in a very great long time.

As the most traveled pontiff of all time, Pope John Paul personally delivered hope, encouragement, and inspiration to more people in more places than any other person in human history. And he was especially beloved by the youth, the future of our world, with whom he had a very special relationship.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike should feel fortunate to have had such a leader in our midst, a man who gave so much to humanity.

Undeterred, perhaps even driven a bit harder by an assassin's bullets, this devout man embarked on an exhausting journey over a quarter of a century to spread words of freedom, compassion, and justice. His mission seems to have been nothing less than redemption of the world. Surely, but for men such as this, the world would have long fallen into irreparable chaos and decline.

Elected Bishop of Rome on October 16, 1978, Pope John Paul II's faith and courage was forged and proven as a Polish priest standing up to the horrors of the Soviet Union. He took his stance at a time when dissidents were whisked away in the dark, never to be heard from again. Yet John Paul's perseverance eventually awakened the soul of a nation of secret believers who stood in candlelit solidarity to bring down an evil empire.

According to Harvard theologian George Williams, a Protestant who be-

friended the Pope many years ago, he is an imposing man in physique, big in intellectual vision, who deeply enjoys people. In a most remarkable way, he is a man whose soul is at leisure with himself.

Only two Popes have served longer and none with more sustained vigor, clarity, or cheerfulness. Even after his step faltered and his voice began to waiver, he bore his infirmities with honor and humor. Although his body was failing, his indomitable spirit continued to touch the world and teach us about the strength and promise of the human heart.

This great Pope was loved by people of various religions and across ideological spectrums. Even many who disagreed with him respected his grand vision and his convictions. Having captured the world's attention and admiration by standing for our better angels for so long, Pope John Paul II will surely stand with President Ronald Reagan as one of the giants of our time.

Both men understood deeply where the hope of mankind lay—in faith, in courage, in liberty. On October 11, 2001, 1 month after the devastating terrorist attacks of 9/11, John Paul offered this prayer:

O God almighty and merciful, he who sows discord cannot understand You. He who loves violence cannot welcome You. Watch over us in our painful condition, tried by the brutal acts of terrorism and death. Comfort Your children and open our hearts to hope that in our time, we again may know serenity and peace.

I can only add my own amen to that prayer.

I yield the floor to Senator ALEXANDER under the terms of the previous order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas. I join with him in his thoughts about Pope John Paul II and the thoughts of our other colleagues that have been expressed. He was a man of sincerity and great character. He traveled more than any other Pope. He traveled the United States more than any other Pope. He carried a message of peace. He carried a message of charity. He had a profound impact on the world and his native country of Poland. It can fairly be said that Poland would not have overthrown communism, at least not when it did, had it not been for Pope John Paul.

I remember in 1987, our family had lived in Australia for 6 months, three teenagers and a 7-year-old, and we came home from around the world in a little different way. We took a train from Moscow to Paris. This was before the Berlin Wall came down. All of us, our different ages in our family, remember how in Poland the churches were open and vibrant, they were active, and people were there. In Russia, they were museums. We thought about that. We think about that today as we

reflect back on the role of this man who was an example for each of us and who deserves the world's attention, the world's prayers, and the world's acclaim.

EIGHT-DAY BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have remarks that I would like to make on two different subjects. One has to do with a visit by a delegation of Senators led by the Democratic leader, the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID, and then a brief remark about the proposal that we use the supplemental appropriations bill to turn State driver's licenses into national identification cards.

First I will comment on the 8-day congressional delegation that I was a part of over the last recess. It was led, as I said, by the Democratic leader. Let me say first how much I appreciate the style of his leadership. He is the Democratic leader, and occasionally there is a partisan word in this place, but this was a bipartisan delegation. We visited eight countries in 8 days, including Jerusalem, Israel, the Palestinian territories—visited leaders of the Palestinian Authority—we visited Kuwait, Iraq, Georgia, and the Ukraine. In France, we received a NATO briefing from our ranking general.

I think it is important for this body to know that in all of his public and private comments, the Democratic leader spoke for the administration of the U.S. Government. In other words, whatever his private views of policy difference might have been, he did not express those outside of this country. I was not surprised by that—I think that is the way it ought to be—but I was impressed by that. I was impressed by that part of his attitude, by the bipartisan quality of the delegation, and by the hard work he expected of those on the delegation. I appreciated the chance to be included, and I appreciated his leadership.

As I am sure the Senator from North Carolina, who occupies the chair, knows, and the Senator from Texas feels the same way, there are so many thousands of people—in my case, Tennesseans—serving in Iraq and Kuwait that I almost felt at home visiting there last week. My wife Honey and I were greeted at the Kuwait Airport by an Army reservist who is publisher of the Dyersburg News and copublisher of the State Gazette. We had dinner with the 844th Engineer Combat Battalion, which is based in Knoxville, which includes more than 500 Tennesseans. One of those reservists is SGT Amanda Bunch, a nursing assistant at Asbury Acres in Maryville, my hometown where my mother and grandfather lived for a few years. The school superintendent from Athens, just down the road from my hometown; the president of the Lexington Rotary Club in west Tennessee, a physician; three Blount County deputies, from my home coun-

ty—all among those serving in the Tennessee National Guard.

I may have felt at home, but as LTC Don Dinello, who commands the 844th, reminded me, no place there is entirely safe. A few days earlier, a patrol had discovered explosives on a bridge over which the colonel's soldiers might have traveled. Thankfully, the explosive device was disarmed before anyone was hurt.

In Baghdad, I ate lunch with three marines who were recent high school graduates from Savannah, Manchester, and Tullahoma, TN. Their mission is to guard the U.S. Embassy. I asked one of these young men what a U.S. Senator should know about their work. Andrew Pottier of Savannah told me:

Not much to know, sir. They shoot at us and we just shoot them back.

Not even in the Green Zone, where several thousand Americans work every day, was it entirely safe. The protocol officer greeted us wearing a nice green dress covered by a flack jacket. When one of the members of our delegation, a female Senator, went to the ladies restroom, a female soldier with an AK-47 went first, inspecting every stall.

I was reminded just a couple of days ago how dangerous it can be when I went to the funeral in Sevier County of SGT Paul W. Thomason, III, the first member of our National Guard unit, the 278th, to be killed.

It is very difficult to grasp the reality of the security situation in Iraq. It is hard to grasp it from television. On the one hand, there is the danger I just described. On the other hand, our casualties are significantly down. Twelve of the 17 Iraqi provinces, we were told by our commanders there, are relatively without incident. An average of 800 supply trucks convoy each day from Kuwait to the edge of Baghdad. Since August, there have been 166 attacks on these trucks, killing 2 soldiers.

Forty percent of those serving in Iraq and Kuwait are reservists or guardsmen. Several thousand of them are from Tennessee. Most left behind families, jobs, and mortgages for up to 18 months. Far from home, they are dealing with child custody, insurance, births, and deaths. Thirty percent of the members of the 844th unit, with whom I visited, are continuing their education online. I brought home information so I could help seven reservists who are having trouble with their citizenship applications.

Here are three other thoughts from that visit:

One, armored vehicles. Commanders in Kuwait assured me that no humvee or truck is now going into a combat zone without Level I or Level II armor.

Second, in the training of Iraq forces, we met with GEN David Patraeus, the former commander of Fort Campbell's 101st Airborne Division and one of our most accomplished military leaders. He persuaded me and I think most other members of our delegation that

training is proceeding in an impressive way. It is not complete, but we are making progress.

Finally, infant democracies. We have sacrificed many lives and paid a heavy price in dollars to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein, but without that decision there would be no infant democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Georgia, Ukraine, and Kuwait would be less democratic, and Syria would not be pulling troops out of Lebanon. We in the world are safer without Saddam Hussein, who the new Prime Minister designate of Iraq, if he is elected, told us, in his words, that Saddam had buried alive 300,000 people.

When will our troops come home? I do not know. I believe we must have a success strategy, not just an exit strategy. This strategy should be based on whether Iraqis can reasonably defend themselves and whether they have some sort of constitutional government. Having liberated Iraq, it is now not our job to stay there until there is a perfect democracy.

We Americans are very impatient. We also sometimes have short memories. We are expecting the Iraqis to come up with a constitution by August. It took America 12 years to write a constitution after declaring our independence, another 130 years to give women the right to vote in this country, and nearly 200 years before African Americans were allowed to vote in every part of America.

I hope after the two Iraqi elections scheduled for the end of 2005 that we will begin to see large numbers of Tennesseans coming home; for our average stay in other instances where the United States has helped build nations, as in Germany and Japan, has been about 5 years.

The Presbyterian Chaplain of the 844th—which I visited—Rev. Tim Fary from Rhea County, I discovered I had met before. He was then 8 years old and I was Governor of Tennessee. I was playing a piano concert with the Chattanooga Symphony at a July concert at Chickamauga near Chattanooga. Tim Fary, 8 years old, was lost.

He told me:

When I found my parents 2 hours later, I had a handwritten note that read, "Dear Tim: Thank you for your advice. Governor Lamar Alexander." That note kept me out of trouble. I still have it.

We hope Tim's prayers, as well as our own, will keep our brave Tennesseans safe so they can accomplish their mission and come home soon.

DRIVER'S LICENSES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would now like to speak for 4 or 5 minutes on another subject. I again thank the Senator from Texas. This is a subject that I recently wrote an op-ed about, which was published last week in the Washington Post. Fearing that many of my colleagues might have been in places such as Texas or Tennessee or Iraq and might have missed